

REMARKS

The Specification is amended at Page 10, Line 25, to supply the missing reference numeral –4—after “guide rails” shown in Fig. 1.

As to the Examiner's objection to Claims 3 and 4 for indefiniteness as to whether the guide rails extend across the lengths of the divided portions of the pile body or fit within the length of each portion and are coupled together, the Specification describes both possibilities. On Page 13, Lines 21-22, it describes that the guide rails 4 may have the length of the leading pile 2 and the coupling pile 3 added. On Page 13, Line 28, to Page 14, Line 6, it is also stated that “the present invention also includes 4 guide rails to be mounted to each of the leading pile 2 and the coupling pile 3, employing 8 guide rails in total ... to form the guide rails 4 with length slightly shorter than the respective length of the leading pile 2 and the coupling pile 3”. Claim 3 is currently amended to clarify the first embodiment in which the guide rails have a length that extends across the divided pile portions.

Claims 2, 14-15, and 17-18 are amended to state the divided pile portions as being –2 or more--, rather than “more than 2”, in correspondence with the description in the Specification. The main claim recitations are amended to provide an antecedent for “the tips”. The indefiniteness cited by the Examiner in Claims 11 and 12 are also corrected.

The Examiner's allowance of Claims 13-15 is appreciated.

As to the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1-11 and 16 as unpatentable over the Fujita U.S. Patent 5,975,808 in view of Gatien U.S. Patent 3,487,646, the Examiner concedes that the Fujita patent does not show the inner guide rails 4 in the pile body, but cites the keyed valleys and lands on the sleeving surfaces of inner and outer pile portions in Gatien as equivalent to the recited “guide rails”. However, the Applicant respectfully disagrees in that the “guide rails” in the present invention are not equivalent to keyed valleys and lands on sleeved pile portion surfaces, but rather the guide rails are provided in the hollow interior space within the pile portion(s) for guiding the core assembly inside the interior to push the tips of the wedge members out through the

openings in the walls of the pile portions. This distinguishing feature has now been clarified in main apparatus Claim 1 and method Claim 16, which are now deemed patentably distinct from the cited prior art.

Claims 2-11 depending from Claim 1 are deemed to be patentably distinct for the same reason as amended Claim 1.

Claims 17-19, which were indicated to contain allowable subject matter, continue to depend from amended Claim 16 and are deemed to be patentably distinct for this reason as well as on separate grounds for patentability.